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tragedy in the heart of South America. Mr. Thouar, a young French traveller, is now facing dangers of every description, in his attempt to discover the remains of our unfortunate countrymen. Gathering information, and supported by good will on all sides, he is making slow but regular advance. We can only hope that he will attain his object; while we do not ignore the dangers to which he so generously exposes himself in trying to penetrate, accompanied only by an interpreter, a country inhabited by Indians who overthrew the mission of Dr. Crevaux. Our warmest hopes for success go with him in his noble undertaking.

At the extreme south of America, at Tierra del Fuego, a French mission, established a year ago, has been commissioned, in accordance with the international programme, to make meteorological and magnetic observations. We look forward to the next return of the guard-ships, whose work, accomplished under the direction of Mr. Martial, commander of the *Romanche*, will form a valuable contribution to the physical geography of these parts.

Finally, after a successful expedition to the northern latitudes, in the polar seas, which, since the voyage of the *Recherche*, have scarcely seen the French flag, one of our countrymen, Mr. Charles Rabot, is at present continuing in Russian Lapland the investigations which he began in Sweden. The region which he includes still offers a vast field for geographical and geological study.

Such, my dear colleagues, are the chief means by which the advance of French geography, in its most active and most persistent form is disclosed. I might still speak to you at length, but we must not deserve the reproach of weaving for ourselves crowns; and, in the noble titles I have just recalled to you, we should see rather the obligations they place upon us than the satisfaction which they bring to our proper national pride.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Marriage laws of the Omahas and cognate tribes.

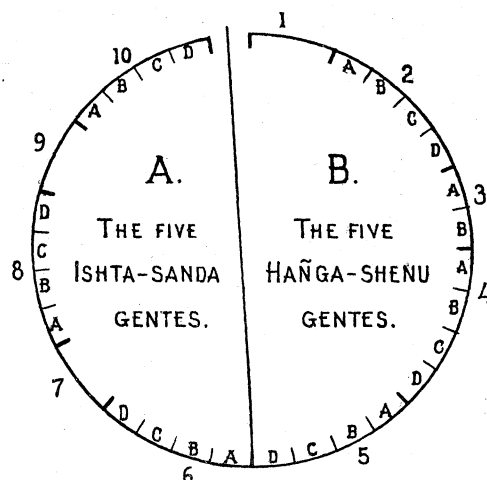
THE Dakotas or Sioux still have mother-right in some of their tribes, and I cannot say how far the following statements apply to them; but the Omahas, Ponkas, Kansas, Osages, and others have father-right, and are governed by the principles here given, with one exception, — the Kansas have recently disregarded their laws, and have begun to marry in the gens.

The Omaha tribe is divided into ten gentes or clans, each gens having its special place in the tribal circle. In the figure the numerals denote the gentes, and the letters the sub-gentes.

Suppose that I belong to 1, the Elk gens, which is also my father's gens: I cannot marry any female of that gens. If my mother belongs to 2, a buffalo gens, I cannot marry any woman of that gens.

Suppose that my father's mother belonged to 3 a, my mother's mother to 4 a, my father's father's mother to 5 a, my mother's father's mother to 6 a, my father's mother's mother to 7, and my mother's mother's mother to 8 a: I cannot marry any women of 3 a, 4 a, 5 a, 6 a, 7, or 8 a, if I know of their re-

lationship to me; but I can marry any women of the other sub-gentes, 3 b, 3 c, 3 d, 4 b, 4 c, 4 d, 5 b, 5 c, 5 d, 6 b, 6 c, 6 d, 8 b, 8 c, or 8 d, as they are not my full kindred.



I can also marry any women of 9 or 10, if they are not forbidden to me for other reasons; that is, if they are not my affinities, such as the wives (*real or possible*) of those whom I call my fathers, mother's brothers, grandfathers, sons, sister's sons, or grandsons.

Principles considered. — 1. Marriage in the father's gens forbidden. 2. Marriage in the mother's gens forbidden. 3. The regulation of the sub-gens. 4. Potential or possible marriages must always be kept in mind, and kinship terms are based upon them.

J. OWEN DORSEY.

Washington, D.C.

Francis Galton's proposed 'Family registers.'

Mr. Francis Galton is now planning to push his inquiries into the laws of heredity upon a more extensive and systematic scale than ever before. The success of his early work, 'Hereditary genius,' led him to observations in a wider field, which extended over several years, and were collected in his very valuable book, 'Inquiries into the human faculty,' which appeared last spring. His new proposal involves the collection of a large number of family biological histories, to extend over three or four generations, and to be obtained by circulating an exhaustive schedule of printed questions. The writer has just received a copy of the latter, together with a prospectus of the general plan, which Mr. Galton will call 'Family registers.' The revised schedules will shortly be ready for distribution. In the mean time an abstract of the prospectus and schedule may be given.

Mr. Galton foresees the difficulties which he will encounter; and, appreciating that the obtaining of accurate family histories of health and disease among laymen is almost out of the question, his prospectus appeals principally to the medical profession. Among doctors, all inherited disease is a disease, and not necessarily an hereditary disgrace, as most of the laity are apt to regard it. In this class, also, the scientific interest attached to inherited imperfections of physique or mind often overbears every other feeling. At all events, although the *anonymous* will be strictly maintained, Mr. Galton seems to expect that few non-professional persons will be ready even